

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3098

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TAGS: ETRN, CA

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - PRECLEARANCE

REF: OTTAWA 886

1. IN MARCH 30 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFFS, SEAL (MOT) BROUGHT UP US PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO PRECLEARANCE AGREEMENT. WHILE EMBOFFS DID NOT GET A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW OF GOC PROBLEM, SEAL MENTIONED FOLLOWING FACTORS: (A) THE ECONOMIC BALANCE IN THE THREE AGREEMENTS WAS IMPORTANT AND THE GOC ESTIMATED THE PRECLEARANCE AGREEMENT WAS WORTH \$25 MILLION TO THE US CARRIERS; AND (B) AN AGREEMENT HAS BEEN INITIALED AND HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE GOC CABINET. TO CHANGE IT NOW EVEN IN THIS MINOR MANNER WOULD REQUIRE THE USUAL EXTENSIVE INTERAGENCY CONSULTATION AND DEBATE IN THE GOC PLUS CABINET APPROVAL. SEAL APPEARED TO BE SUGGESTING THAT IN VIEW OF HIS EXTENSIVE WORK LOAD AND THE FACT THAT HIS AND MOT'S MAJOR ACTIVITY RIGHT NOW CENTERS AROUND RAILROAD POLICY (SEE OTTAWA A-134), THIS WAS NOT THE OCCASION FOR REOPENING ANY ASPECTS OF BILATERAL AVIATION PACKAGE WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE ASSERTED STRONGLY THAT THESE AGREEMENTS NEGOTIATED OVER SO MANY YEARS OF DISCUSSION SHOULD BE SIGNED AS INITIALED.

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2. HOWEVER, IN AN EARLIER MARCH 30 CONVERSATION WITH TCO, SEAL INDICATED HE WAS NOT CLEAR IN HIS OWN MIND AS TO POLITICALLY HOW IMPORTANT THIS PROPOSED CHANGE WAS TO THE UNITED STATES AND REITERATED HIS POINT OF MARCH 27 THAT IF IT WERE REALLY IMPORTANT HE WOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO LOOK FURTHER AT IT. HE STATED THAT THERE WOULD BE OCCASIONS WHEN SOME CHANGE WOULD BE POLITICALLY IMPORTANT TO CANADA AND, WHEN THIS WAS INDICATED, HE WOULD EXPECT USG TO ACCOMMODATE THE CANADIAN INTEREST. CONSEQUENTLY, HE HAD TO KNOW JUST HOW IMPORTANT THE ACCOMMODATION OF PILGRIM (AND OTHER COMMUTER CARRIERS) REALLY WAS TO THE USG.

3. COMMENT: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS US "VALUATION" OF PRECLEARANCE AGREEMENT TO OUR CARRIERS MAY BE IN THE VICINITY OF \$12 MILLION. SHOULD THERE BE A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN VALUES, THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE RESOLVED AND WOULD MAKE QUICK AGREEMENT MORE DIFFICULT.

4. FURTHERMORE, SEAL IS CORRECT IN HIS EMPHASIS ON MOT'S INVOLVEMENT IN RAILROAD QUESTION. THIS PLUS OTHER SURFACE TRANSPORT ASPECTS OF THE WEST HAS BECOME A HIGHEST PRIORITY CONSIDERATION IN THE BUREAUCRACY AND INVOLVES LARGE NUMBERS OF LIMITED PROFESSIONAL STAFF. THE NEW AVIATION NEGOTIATIONS UNIT IN MOT (SEE OTTAWA 362) IS NOT YET FULLY STAFFED AND RIGHT NOW IS OVEREXTENDED ON THE INTERNATIONAL FRONT WITH BACK TO BACK NEGOTIATIONS WITH JAPAN AND LEBANON. CONSEQUENTLY, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR MOT TO REFOCUS ON WHAT IS CONSIDERED A SETTLED ISSUE.

5. FINALLY, EMBASSY NOTES THAT IN JANUARY WHEN GOC REQUESTED USG CONSIDER ESTABLISHMENT PRECLEARANCE FACILITIES AT VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA (SEE OTTAWA 0053), SEAL ORALLY INDICATED MOT ATTACHED HIGH PRIORITY TO CONSIDERATION THIS REQUEST WITHIN CONTEXT OF ITS INTEREST IN GOC GIVING APPEARANCE OF ACTION REGARDING WESTERN TRANSPORT PROBLEMS. THERE HAS BEEN NO FORMAL RESPONSE BY USG TO EXTAFF NOTE ON THIS SUBJECT (WHICH ADMITTEDLY SUGGESTED CONSIDERATION OF ISSUE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TAKE PLACE AFTER SIGNING THE THREE AGREEMENTS) AND SEAL DID NOT EXPLICITLY ALLUDE TO IT IN THE CONVERSATIONS OF MARCH 27 AND 30. HOWEVER, THAT ISSUE HAS SOME POLITICAL IMPORTANCE IN CANADA. IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO INDICATE WE WILL ATTEMPT TO ACCOMMODATE GOC IN THAT CONTEXT AT SAME TIME THAT WE ARE PUSHING FOR OUR AMENDMENT AND PARTICULARLY IF WE CONSIDER ACCOMMODATION OF COMMUTER AIRLINES AS

REALLY IMPORTANT.

6. RECOMMENDATION: EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT UNLESS DEPARTMENT DESIRES TO PUSH THIS COMMUTER ISSUE AS ONE OF MAJOR POLITICAL IMPORTANCE, AND ONE FOR WHICH WE ARE WILLING TO RISK FURTHER DELAY IN SIGNING THE THREE AGREEMENTS, USG DROP THE PROPOSAL FOR NOW. WE SHOULD GO AHEAD AND SIGN THE AGREEMENTS AS THEY STAND AND PURSUE THIS ISSUE AS A POSSIBLE AMENDMENT TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY A LATER EXCHANGE OF NOTES.
PORTER

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